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Early Vanguards of Progressive Education: The Committee of Ten, the Committee of Seven, and Social Education

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EARLY VANGUARDS OF PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION: THE COMMITTEE OF TEN, THE COMMITTEE OF SEVEN, AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: By the early 20th century, a new citizenship education curriculum had emerged that endorsed a significantly broadened definition of citizenship. Early vanguards of transformation in the social education curriculum were evidenced in the 1890s in the reports of the Committee of Ten and the Committee of Seven, commissioned by the National Education Association and the American Historical Association, respectively. The hallmarks of early Progressive Era educational change were the development of new social science methods of research and investigation, expanded social studies course sequences, innovative experiential teaching methods, social studies curricula designed for younger children, and ultimately the development of new community civics courses. Based upon examinations of the reports and the deliberations of the committees, the historical record indicates that the progressive education movement had antecedents in the 1890s, much earlier than the founding of the Progressive Education Association in 1919. The work of the Committee of Ten and the Committee of Seven ought to be viewed as an early part of a larger progressive movement that helped to gradually transform the schools. The legacy was lasting. Evidence of the resultant curriculum changes remain today.

In 1896, X-rays were used in the United States for the first time in the treatment of breast cancer, the Spanish American War approached as the U.S. Congress granted belligerent status to revolutionaries in Cuba, *Plessy v. Ferguson* was affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court, thereby upholding the "separate but equal" doctrine, and Utah entered the Union as the 45th state with a constitution that included women's suffrage.[1] On the verge of the 20th century, the United States was not a superpower but increasingly a nation of recent immigrants filled with complexities and contradictions, striving to achieve prominence. How could women be granted rights in one

[1]Arthur Schlesinger, ed., *The Almanac of American History* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1983), pp. 381–382.

state, while at the same time blacks could be denied rights by the federal government? How could scientists make progress in the treatment of disease, while at the same time scientific knowledge furthered the massive killing of humans in war? How were such paradoxes possible in the United States? How did public education, and in particular the late-19th-century history and social science curricula, address these social issues and contribute to changing notions of citizenship? Clearly, the 1890s brought change and transformation, sprinkled with attempts to cling to the past and preserve the status quo.

Public education, and social education especially, played an essential role in the dramatic transformation of American society. By the early 20th century, a new citizenship education curriculum had emerged, which endorsed a significantly broadened definition of citizenship. The hallmark of Progressive Era educational change was the development of new social science methods of research and investigation, expanded social studies course sequences, innovative experiential teaching methods, social studies curricula designed for younger children, and new community civics courses that "completely ignored formal politics and government in favor of themes of cooperation and community."[2] By emphasizing the cultural concept of citizenship rather than a narrow legal conception, groups such as women, blacks, and children, who traditionally had not possessed political rights, such as voting, were included in the new social education curricula. Notions of improving society through cooperation, community works, and social activism were essential components of the Progressive Era legacy. Today, the high school social studies curriculum throughout the United States differs only slightly from that recommended by Progressive Era educators who served on national committees to propose modifications to the school curricula. The antecedents of this educational change appeared in the 1880s and '90s.

In the 1890s, the progressive movement in the United States was in its infancy. Progressivism was largely conceived as a response by the democratic reform movement to the problems and paradoxes evident in the Gilded Age. The post–Civil War era witnessed rapid industrialization, massive immigration, the rise of "robber barons," the growth of corporate business, increased corruption among big-city bosses, and rampant tenement conditions among the poor and working classes. Progressives, although not a uniform group, sought to correct these pernicious evils through increased democracy, regula-

[2]Julie A. Reuben, "Beyond Politics: Community Civics and the Redefinition of Citizenship in the Progressive Era," *History of Education Quarterly* (Winter 1997): 399.

tion of big business, social justice, conservation, and public service.[3] Progressivism soon embraced education reform. Although Lawrence Cremin claims that a capsule definition of progressive education did not exist, for "progressive education meant different things to different people, and these differences were only compounded by the remarkable diversity of American education," he contends that progressive education was a "vast humanitarian effort" and a "many-sided effort to use the schools to improve the lives of individuals."[4] More recently, William Reese also argues that the origins of progressive education "were part of a larger humanitarian movement . . ." that ". . . sought both social stability and social uplift."[5]

During the late 19th century progressive educators and citizens sought not only to improve the quality of education but also to increase access to education. This laboratory of democracy began with the school. In 1892, the National Education Association (NEA) created the Committee of Ten to report on the status of secondary education and to recommend standards in the various school subjects. Its special Subcommittee on History, Civil Government, and Political Economy met at Madison, Wisconsin, and developed recommendations to the larger Committee for the teaching of social science subjects in high schools. Four years later, in 1896, the American Historical Association's Committee of Seven evaluated and further developed recommendations for the teaching of historical studies in secondary schools. The work of these committees and several subsequent committees, such as the Committee of Five, the Committee of Eight, and the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (CRSE), helped to lay the foundation for educational curriculum in general, and the teaching of social studies in particular, that exists in most American schools today.[6]

Clearly, the fundamental transformation of American education during the Progressive Era facilitated the United States' growth as a global power. Providing educational opportunities to all students essentially differentiated the United States from most other countries. Even if the paths of opportunity were not equal for all students, as

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[3]George Tindall, *America: A Narrative History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1988), p. 940; Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876–1957* (New York: Knopf, 1962), pp. viii–x.

[4]Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876–1957* (New York: Knopf, 1962), pp. viii–x.

[5]William Reese, "Origins of Progressive Education," *History of Education Quarterly* (Spring 2001): 3.

[6]National Education Association, *Report of the Committee on Secondary School Studies* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1893), hereafter cited as the Committee of Ten; American Historical Association, *The Study of History in Schools: Report to the American Historical Association by The Committee of Seven* (New York: MacMillan, 1899),

established in 1954 by *Brown v. Board of Education,* the increased access to education as evidenced by the growth in the number of schools and the number of students attending schools, and the development of a broadened curricula designed to meet the needs and interests of all students, helped create a more informed citizenry, a more educated work force, and a broadened understanding of citizenship in general.

William Reese traces the origins of progressivism to a "rising ethos of caring within emergent capitalism, which increased human misery, but also . . . [promoted] empathy, compassion, and social action."[7] He claims that progressivism had antecedents in romanticism and the 18th- and 19th-century reform movements of the Western world. For example, a growing fascination with the child can be found in the Enlightenment and the romantic-era writings of John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and more specifically in the arena of education, in the work of Johann Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel.[8] The origins of universal American education and romantic ideals of kinder, more active pedagogy date back to Horace Mann's vision of public schooling. Nonetheless, common schools were not preordained. Real educators, politicians, and leaders had to make decisions that affected untold millions. As Lawrence Cremin writes, Americans in the late 19th century faced "the challenge of modernism" but "inherited a commitment to popular education that was extraordinary for its time."[9] The notion of popular education was an instrumental part of the progressive education movement.

Throughout the later half of the 20th century through the present, progressive education has been subject to criticism from educators such as Arthur Bestor and Richard Hofstader, and to more

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hereafter cited as the Committee of Seven; American Historical Association, *The Report of History in Secondary Schools by the Committee of Five* (New York: MacMillan, 1911), hereafter cited as the Committee of Five; American Historical Association, *The Study of History in the Elementary Schools: Report to the American Historical Association by The Committee of Eight* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), hereafter cited as the Committee of Eight. Bureau of Education, *The Social Studies in Secondary Education, Report of the Committee on Social Studies of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education of the National Education Association* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1916), Reprint, Ed. Murry R. Nelson (Eric Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, 1994).

[7]William Reese, "Origins of Progressive Education," *History of Education Quarterly* (Spring 2001): 4.

[8]Ibid.: 5–16.

[9]Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 19, 153.

recent attacks from Diane Ravitch.[10] Yet, progressive education has also had its supporters, most notably Lawrence Cremin, Arthur Zilversmit, Susan Semel and Alan Sadnovik, and most recently William Wraga.[11] Perhaps if the debate over progressive education were framed as an argument about whether or not one favored universal public education, the dispute would not have become so polemical. Despite champions and critics, William Reese suggests that scholars should be "humbled by the magnitude of the subject."[12] The social studies curriculum certainly has been a large part of the debate. As discussed herein, progressivism meant more than universal education, and social education soon developed a broader focus than the traditional study of political and military history from which the subject originated.

Many factors contributed to the growth of public schooling in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th century. The larger national progressive movement certainly influenced the nature and development of U.S. schools. Indeed, schools with Deweyan progressive notions of pedagogy, child-centeredness, social reconstruction, reform, broadened conceptions of citizenship, and studies that emphasize preparation for life, predate the work of the CRSE report of 1918.[13] Evidence of the progressive movement's influence on education can be traced back to the work of the Committee of Ten and the subsequent work of the Committee of Seven. One outgrowth of the progressive education movement, the comprehensive high school model still in place today, can trace it origins to the 1890s and a subsequent "four decades in a series of reports."[14] Furthermore, the sub-

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[10]See Arthur Bestor, *Educational Wasteland: The Retreat from Learning in Our Schools* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1953); Richard Hofstader, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1962); and Diane Ravitch, *Left Out: A Century of Failed School Reform* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

[11]Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876–1957* (New York: Knopf, 1961); Arthur Zilversmit, *Changing Schools: Progressive Education Theory and Practice, 1930–1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Susan Semel and Alan Sadnovik, *"Schools of Tomorrow," Schools of Today: What Happened to Progressive Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999); William Wraga, "A Progressive Legacy Squandered: The *Cardinal Principles* Report Reconsidered," *History of Education Quarterly* (Winter 2001): 494–519.

[12]William Reese, "Origins of Progressive Education," *History of Education Quarterly* (Spring 2001): 1

[13]Susan Semel and Alan Sadnovik, *"Schools of Tomorrow," Schools of Today: What Happened to Progressive Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), p. xiii; William Wraga, "A Progressive Legacy Squandered: The *Cardinal Principles* Report Reconsidered," *History of Education Quarterly* (Winter 2001): 517.

[14]William Wraga, "A Progressive Legacy Squandered: The *Cardinal Principles* Report Reconsidered," *History of Education Quarterly* (Winter 2001): 511.

ject of social studies did not originate suddenly with the ideas of "social studies insurgents" and the 1913–1916 Committee on Social Studies, as David Warren Saxe claims,[15] but rather derives from the early progressive movement and the early progressive educators of the 1880s and 1890s who gradually helped to initiate changes in school curriculum and pedagogy.

PROGRESSIVE PRECURSOR: THE COMMITTEE OF TEN

In 1892, the National Education Association authorized the Committee of Ten to recommend standards for the various subjects in the secondary school curriculum.[16] The Committee of Ten comprised nine separate conferences based upon the academic disciplines of (1) Latin, (2) Greek, (3) English, (4) Modern Languages, (5) Mathematics, (6) Physics, Astronomy, and Chemistry, (7) Natural History, (8) History, Civil Government, and Political Economy, and (9) Geography.[17] The special Subcommittee on History, Civil Government, and Political Economy, meeting in Madison, Wisconsin, developed recommendations to the larger Committee for the teaching of history in the schools. The Committee of Ten included several prominent historians, many who became vanguards of the so-called New Social History. College professors at the Madison Conference included Albert Bushnell Hart, Charles Kendall Adams, James Harvey Robinson, Edward Bourne, Jesse Macy, William Scott, and future U.S. president Woodrow Wilson; Frederick Jackson Turner assisted the members.[18] These historians advocated a broadened conception of history that was not confined solely to descriptions of military and political events. Later, in 1904 at the International Congress of Arts

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[15]David Warren Saxe, *Social Studies in Schools: A History of the Early Years* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 1, 15.

[16]See Henry Johnson, *Teaching of History in Elementary and Secondary Schools* (New York: MacMillan, 1917); Herbert Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987); Edward Krug, *The Shaping of the American High School* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964); Michael Whelan, "A Particularly Lucid Lens: The Committee of Ten and the Social Studies Committee in Historical Context," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 12 (Spring 1997): 256–268; David Warren Saxe, *Social Studies in Schools: A History of the Early Years* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); Diane Ravitch, *The Schools We Deserve* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

[17]The Committee of Ten, pp. 8–11.

[18]The Committee of Ten, pp. 10, 166; David Warren Saxe, *Social Studies in Schools: A History of the Early Years* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 39; Michael Whelan, "A Particularly Lucid Lens: The Committee of Ten and the Social Studies Committee in Historical Context," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 12 (Spring 1997): 260.

and Science, many of these same historians, including Woodrow Wilson, James Harvey Robinson, and Frederick Jackson Turner, argued for interpretive history that incorporated all aspects of human life rather than traditional narrative political histories.[19] Robinson labeled this approach to history "the new history" and in 1912 published a book on the topic of the same name.[20] Other members of the Madison Conference headed secondary schools and included Abram Brown, Ray Green Huling, and Henry Warren.[21] A distinct conference on geography was held at Cook County Normal School in Illinois, and included college and secondary school teachers, a member of the Weather Bureau, and progressive educators such as Francis W. Parker.[22] With an array of membership on the Committee of Ten that included college and secondary school educators and government leaders, much deliberation ensued at the meetings over the nature and plan for historical and social education in the schools. Yet, membership on the Committee of Ten has often been portrayed as elitist, furthering the depiction that the "Committee of Ten report failed to consider the full implications of what a system of mass secondary education would entail."[23]

Ultimately, the college professors, secondary school leaders, and government officials who authored the report of the Committee of Ten called for a more complete program in history, similar to what had been common in Europe for more than 50 years.[24] At the time, such recommendations were quite progressive.[25] History was a relatively new subject in the secondary school curriculum, compared with classical subjects such as Greek, Latin, and mathematics. Members of the Committee of Ten at Madison argued that the amount of history taught in nationwide secondary schools needed to be broadened. History was not a universally established secondary school subject in 1892, and such suggestions indicated a transformation of the traditional classical curriculum. For example, some schools did

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[19]Chara Haeussler Bohan, "Go to the Sources: Lucy Maynard Salmon and the Teaching of History" (Ph.D. thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 1999), p. 155.

[20]James H. Robinson, *The New History: Essays Illustrating the Modern Historical Outlook* (New York: Macmillan, 1912)..

[21]The Committee of Ten, p. 10.

[22]Ibid., p. 11.

[23]Herbert M. Kliebard, *Changing Course: American Curriculum Reform in the 20th Century* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), p. 40.

[24]Henry Johnson, *The Teaching of History in Elementary and Secondary Schools* (New York: MacMillan, 1917), p. 134.

[25]Michael Whelan, "A Particularly Lucid Lens: The Committee of Ten and the Social Studies Committee in Historical Context," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 12 (Spring 1997): 264.

not teach history as a separate subject but incorporated historical topics in classics courses; other schools offered a single year of general history; and others provided a more extensive social education curriculum. In large part, the Madison conferees attempted to establish a degree of cohesion and uniformity among the secondary school history course offerings.

Although the report of the Committee of Ten recommended a more comprehensive program of history education, it endorsed two specific programs of history curricula. The first began with 5th grade and included eight years of historical study, and a second began when applicable and recommended six years of historical study.[26] At a minimum, students could study two years of required history and one year of elective history in American high schools. However, the Committee members suggested that having students study history each year of high school would be preferable. In addition, the report stated that teachers should use new teaching methods that engaged students and encouraged students to "broaden and cultivate the mind" rather than employ the traditional method of having students engage in rote memorization.[27] Finally, the report noted that the purpose of historical study was to prepare students for life, not for college. Such statements clearly reveal progressive educational thought and the influence of leading progressive thinkers such as John Dewey and Jane Addams. The school curricula needed to be broadened, not only to stimulate students' interest but also to serve a functional need. In addition, by recommending that the social education curricula be extended into the elementary grades to teach younger students, the curricula necessarily were more egalitarian than elitist.[28] More students would receive social education instruction, even if they did not attend high school.

The Committee of Ten report was a germinal, early progressive document. Diane Ravitch portrays the Committee of Ten's report as supportive of the traditional academic curriculum,[29] whereas William Wraga states that such claims misrepresent the historical record and work of the Committee of Ten. Although Wraga claims that the Committee of Ten viewed high school as an elite institution, rather than "envisioning secondary education for all youth, as progressives later would do," the seeds for educational change were planted with the

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[26]The Committee of Seven, pp. 163–201.

[27]Ibid., pp. 166–167.

[28]Julie A. Reuben, "Beyond Politics: Community Civics and the Redefinition of Citizenship in the Progressive Era," *History of Education Quarterly* (Winter 1997): 407.

[29]Diane Ravitch, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

Committee's report, and with the inescapable growth and changes transpiring in American society.[30] Although only 3.5 percent of American youth graduated from high school in 1889–90,[31] a few years before the Committee began its work, the massive immigration during this time period must have made the Committee of Ten authors keenly aware that the numbers of high school students were dramatically increasing even as they wrote their report. Indeed, G. Stanley Hall's contemporaneous criticism of the report, that it failed "to take into account that 'great army of incapables' who were then invading the schools," stands as evidence that educators were aware of the rising number of students in American schools.[32]

However, if the members of the Committee of Ten and later the Committee of Seven had hoped to retain an elitist curriculum, they would not have extended their recommendations to the elementary history and social education curriculum, where a much larger percentage of students were enrolled. The Committee of Ten declared, "Anyone who reads these nine reports consecutively will be struck with the fact that all these bodies of experts desire to have elements of their several subjects taught earlier than they now are; and that all the Conferences on all the subjects except the languages desire to have given in the elementary schools what may be called perspective views."[33] These recommendations to modify primary school curricula ultimately led to the American Historical Association's Report of the Committee of Eight, which specifically addressed the study of history in the nation's elementary schools. In fact, the Committee of Eight report explicitly credits the Committee of Ten and the Committee of Seven with beginning the earlier formulation of a program of history in elementary schools.[34] According to the Committee of Eight, the six-year course of historical study for elementary schools, prepared by Lucy M. Salmon, however, had not received the attention it deserved.

The authors of the Committee of Ten report should be viewed as the vanguards of early progressive thought, not traditionalists committed to upholding the status quo. They sought to create a prominent place for history in the school curriculum, and they pro-

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[30]William Wraga, "Left Out: The Villainization of Progressive Education in the United States," *Educational Researcher* 30 (October 2001): 34.

[31]U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 2001, Table 103, available at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/digest2001/tables/dt103.asp.

[32]Herbert M. Kliebard, *Changing Course: American Curriculum Reform in the 20th Century* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), p. 43.

[33]The Committee of Ten, p. 14.

[34]The Committee of Eight, pp. vi–vii.

duced a document that recommended changes to history education in schools, which included broadening the focus and extending the history and social education curricula. These adjustments included revisions in the purpose, methods, and curricular sequence of history and social science education. These modifications continued later with the work of the Committee of Seven, a group that was charged with furthering the work of the Committee of Ten. In fact, Albert Bushnell Hart served on both. James Harvey Robinson served on the Committee of Ten and the later 1916 Committee on Social Studies, a subcommittee of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. Obviously, these committees had a continuity of progressive educational thought and membership.

The progressive educational reform that resulted from the work of these committees was fortuitous because the number of students who entered American schools dramatically rose throughout the Progressive Era. As American students increased in number and diversity, the need for change became more profound. By 1900, shortly after the Committee of Seven published its report, the number of high school graduates as a percentage of the U.S. population had nearly doubled to 6.4 percent. Remarkable increases in the high school graduation rate continued throughout the Progressive Era, during the early part of the 20th century. In 1920, graduates accounted for 16.8 percent of the population, in 1930 they accounted for 29.0 percent of the population, and in 1940 they were 50.8 percent of the population.[35] The Progressive Era witnessed unprecedented growth in the numbers of students attending school, unlike any expansion before or since. American schools were compelled to respond to increased enrollment and changing demographics.

Progressive Era changes to school curricula, however, did not result solely from rising enrollment in American public schools. A subtle egalitarian sentiment that the recommendations should be the same for all, that education was preparation for life and therefore suitable preparation for college, and that all students were entitled to the best methods of teaching the various subjects pervaded the Committee of Ten report.[36] Indeed, the committee noted,

> . . . our interest is in the school children who have no expectation of going to college, the larger number of whom will not even enter a high school. This feeling is strengthened by the consideration that proportionally a

[35]U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Education Digest 2000, Table 103, available at http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/digest2001/tables/dt103.asp.

[36]The Committee of Ten, p. 167; Herbert Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), p. 12.

much smaller number of girls go to college than of the boys, and it is important that both sexes shall be well grounded on these subjects. An additional responsibility is thrown upon the American system of education by the great number of children of foreigners, children who must depend on the schools for their notions of American institutions . . .[37]

Finally, the Committee of Ten report mentioned that the methods teachers employed should cultivate the mind and teach the individual to think, rather than promote rote memorization. The Committee added that historical studies were particularly well suited to developing good citizens and promoting moral character.[38] These ideals were hallmarks of Progressive Era reform movements. More specific elaboration of progressive changes in the study of history in the schools was expanded upon by the Committee of Seven.

THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE OF SEVEN

Members of the Committee of Seven hailed from the American Historical Association (AHA). Founded in 1884 at Johns Hopkins University, the AHA was the first national association dedicated to promoting an interest in the study of history.[39] Concerned about the status of historical studies in secondary education, August F. Nightingale, chairman of the National Education Association's Committee on College Entrance Requirements, had asked historians at the 1896 meeting of the American Historical Association to provide a report detailing the practice of teaching history in American schools.[40] To make an accurate evaluation, committee members conducted a nationwide survey, analyzed the resultant data, and made appropriate recommendations based upon the social science findings. The Committee of Seven's report had a significant and lasting impact on the practice of history and social education in American schools, and vestiges remain in public schools today. For example, a three- or four-year sequence of social science courses remains the typical program of study in most of the nation's public high schools.

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[37]The Committee of Ten, pp. 167–168.

[38]Ibid., pp. 169–170.

[39]Charles H. Haskins to Lucy Salmon, 31 October 1902, Special Collections, Vassar College Libraries, Lucy Maynard Salmon Papers, Box 47, Folder 12. Haskins, corresponding secretary of the AHA, was trying to increase membership and included in his letter to Salmon a pamphlet detailing the founding history of the AHA.

[40]David Warren Saxe, *Social Studies in Schools: A History of the Early Years* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 53–54; Howard Boozer, *The American Historical Association and the Schools, 1884–1956* (Ph.D. dissertation, Washington University, 1960), pp. 51, 55.

As its charter, the Committee planned to make recommendations about the teaching of history and to foster more uniformity in secondary school history. The Committee of Seven considered the scope and sequence of history offerings in secondary schools and suggested college entrance requirements.[41] The report recommended a four-year course of study that included Ancient History, Medieval and Modern European History, English History, American History, and Civil Government. The report also proposed an increase in the amount of time that students engaged in historical studies. The members of the Committee of Seven were Andrew McLaughlin (chair), Herbert B. Adams, George L. Fox, Albert Bushnell Hart, Charles H. Haskins, H. Morse Stephens, and Lucy M. Salmon.[42] Six members were prominent historians. Herbert B. Adams had organized the American Historical Association at its founding in 1884. Harvard historian Albert Bushnell Hart, a prolific author, had written a popular guide on the study of American history.[43] Hart later was elected president of the AHA (1909) and the American Political Science Association (1912).[44] George L. Fox, headmaster of the Hopkins Grammar School in New Haven, Connecticut, was the only individual practicing in a secondary school.[45] The only woman on the committee, Lucy Maynard Salmon, was chair of the history department at Vassar College.[46] In 1915 Salmon became the first woman elected to the Executive Council of the AHA, at a time when women in most states remained disenfranchised. Salmon's election to the AHA council highlights the membership's support for a broadened conception of citizenship. Had election been reserved only to those with the legal right to vote, Salmon could not have served on the council.

Initially the members of the Committee conducted a nationwide survey of secondary history curricula in the United States. After ex-

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[41]The Committee of Seven, p. v.

[42]Ibid., p. iii.

[43]Michael Whelan, "Albert Bushnell Hart and the Origins of Social Studies Education," *Theory and Research in Social Education* 22 (Fall 1994): 423–440.

[44]Michael Whelan, "A Particularly Lucid Lens: The Committee of Ten and the Social Studies Committee in Historical Context," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 12 (Spring 1997): 260.

[45]Howard Boozer, "The American Historical Association and the Schools, 1884–1956" (Ph.D. dissertation, Washington University, 1960), p. 53; The Committee of Seven, p. v.

[46]Chara Haeussler Bohan, "Go to the Sources: Lucy Maynard Salmon and the Teaching of History" (Ph.D. thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 1999); Chara Bohan, "Lucy Maynard Salmon: Progressive Historian, Teacher, and Democrat," in *"Bending the Future to Their Will": Civic Women, Social Education, and Democracy,* ed. Margaret Smith Crocco and O. L. Davis Jr. (New York: Roman & Littlefield, 1999), pp. 47–92.

panding their examination of history instruction to an international level, these historians made general recommendations, primarily in the form of a report, to improve history education in the United States.[47] The Committee explored the teaching of history in Germany, England, France, and Canada as a means of comparing practices, methods, curricula, teacher preparation, and pedagogy with those employed in the United States. Clearly, the Committee of Seven sought a broad base of comparison, rather than an inward-looking, myopic perspective that might have resulted from merely examining U.S. schools. Nonetheless, the Committee also had to ascertain the common practices of teaching history in American schools, for no nationwide study heretofore had been undertaken.

Conducting a survey, or "circulars of inquiry" as the members referred to their initial method of gathering data on the status of history education in U.S. schools, was the subject of the very first meeting of the Committee of Seven, held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on April 16–17, 1897.[48] The Committee wanted to develop questionnaires addressed to teachers and decided to "secure lists of representative schools, through state education agencies." The Committee sent out several hundred circulars to schools asking for information. Rather than distributing questionnaires at random, the committee requested that state educational authorities suggest schools that fairly represented the teaching of history in the state.[49] Approximately 250 responses were received, and the data were then analyzed.[50] Survey questions addressed the conditions of the school, the nature of history courses taught, the time allotted for history instruction, methods of instruction, the selection of textbooks, the use of collateral reading and source materials, library facilities, written work required of students, teacher preparation, and potential difficulties encountered.[51] A

[47]See Chara Bohan, "Historical and International Dimensions of History Education: The Work of the Committee of Seven," in *Raising Standards in History Education: International Review of History Education, Vol. 3,* ed. Alaric Dickinson, Peter Gordon, and Peter Lee (London: Woburn Press, 2001), pp. 56–72.

[48]Records of the American Historical Association, Library of Congress, Box 459, from the minutes of the Cambridge meeting, 16–17 April 1897, recorded by Albert Bushnell Hart, secretary of the Committee of Seven. Most examinations of the Committee of Seven have been based upon the published report of the Committee. This is the first undertaking, to the author's knowledge, to examine the deliberations of the Committee of Seven.

[49]Records of the American Historical Association, Library of Congress, Box 459, Committee of Seven Official Questionnaire to Schools.

[50]The Committee of Seven, p. 5.

[51]Records of the American Historical Association, Library of Congress, Box 459, Committee of Seven Official Questionnaire to Schools; The Committee of Seven, pp. 152–153.

follow-up inquiry was sent to respondents that probed even further. These questions tackled some of the more controversial issues with respect to history education at the time. For example, questions from the second circular of inquiry included the following:[52]

1. Courses. What is your practice and what is your opinion on having a separate course in history for those only who expect to go to college; and another course for others?
2. Order of Courses. What do you consider the best order in which to take up the five subjects most frequently offered; viz American, English, General, Greek, Roman?
3. General History. What is your practice and what is your opinion to a one year's course (of five exercises a week) in "general history"?
4. Sources. Do you use sources for any purpose—either as collateral reading or as material for written work? What do you consider the advantages and disadvantages of the method?
5. Teachers. Are your teachers of history especially prepared for that work, as your teachers of languages or science are expected to be prepared?

The Committee of Seven members boldly employed newly developed social science methods to investigate the status of history instruction. Methods such as collecting surveys and analyzing statistical data were rare forms of conducting historical inquiry, particularly in the late 1800s. However, these methods were typical of the work of the new, progressive, professional social scientists, such as Lester Frank Ward, Florence Kelly, Jane Addams, and Carroll Wright.[53] Clearly, the members of the Committee of Seven were "progressive" in their approach to researching the status of history in schools. Nor were they afraid to address controversial issues. The historical record indicates that some of the criticisms later heaped upon the Committee of Seven were topics that the Committee members themselves heatedly debated at their meetings. These deliberations were not issues that only later were addressed by social studies insurgents.[54] Committee members vocalized many differences of opinions about history education, especially with regard to tracking, course sequencing, the study of general history, the use of primary sources (sometimes referred to as the Nebraska method), and the preparation of teachers. To produce a report that all Committee members could support, members reached compromises.

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[52]Records of the American Historical Association, Library of Congress, Box 459, Committee of Seven Official Questionnaire to Schools.

[53]Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 158.

[54]David Warren Saxe, *Social Studies in Schools: A History of the Early Years* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 81–98.

Through deliberation and inquiry, the members of the Committee of Seven were able to negotiate the tenuous line between what Schwab and Reid later described as "inquiry suited to problems arising from states of mind and inquiry suited to problems arising from states of affairs."[55] In other words, the Committee members tried to negotiate the path between theoretical beliefs about an ideal history curriculum in schools and the practical realities of adopting a history program suited to the needs of a wide variety of schools throughout the country. The Committee of Seven's use of questionnaires represented a shift from the work of the Committee of Ten's largely theoretical inquiry to a more powerful engagement in practical inquiry. The Committee of Seven's recommendations had a profound and enduring impact on history and social education.

The dialogue at the first meeting of the Committee of Seven in Cambridge, Massachusetts, about economics, civil government, and biographical studies reveals that the social sciences had gained enough distinction to be part of the Committee's deliberations. Members discussed various aspects of the history and social science curricula during two full-day sessions. On several topics, such as writing a report, developing circulars of inquiry, conducting foreign investigations, and teaching American and English history, there was unanimous agreement and, therefore, limited discussion.[56] On other issues, however, members held vastly different opinions. Pointed debate ensued. For example, the Committee fervently discussed the issue of whether or not economics should be taught as a separate course in schools. The Committee resolved that "[e]conomics ought not to be considered a part of history; but that economic conditions were a necessary part of historical study."[57] Therefore, economic conditions were not to be neglected in historical studies, but economics was not to be recommended as a separate course. Apparently, many Committee members believed the study of economics was too advanced for high school study and thought it should be reserved for college coursework.

Members also discussed the proposition that Civil Government be taught as a separate subject. The proposition was withdrawn, however, in favor of a resolution that Civil Government be taught in connection with American History. At a later meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, in December 1897, the Committee continued its discussion on

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[55]William Reid, *Curriculum as Institution and Practice: Essays in the Deliberative Tradition* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1999), p. 9.

[56]Records of the American Historical Association, Library of Congress, Box 459, from the minutes of the Cambridge meeting, 16–17 April 1897.

[57]Ibid.

the teaching of American History "with collateral study of Civil Government" and noted that at the elementary grades "it is desirable to teach American History and Civil Government with some preliminary or collateral study of biography."[58] The discussion about social science subjects and the use of social science methods in conducting an inquiry regarding historical studies in schools highlight the notion that the social studies did not suddenly appear, as depicted by David Warren Saxe, with the "social studies insurgents"[59] and the Committee on the Reorganization of Secondary Education report of 1918, but instead social sciences had been gaining prominence and consideration throughout the 1890s. Indeed, by 1909, one of the modifications of the Committee of Seven's report that had gained considerable support from the New England Teachers Association and that was printed in *The History Teacher's Magazine* was the recommendation that Civil Government be offered as a distinct course, separate from the teaching of American History.[60]

The Committee also debated at great length whether or not to recommend the teaching of a course called "General History." Members held sharp differences of opinion about the validity of such a course. Problems arose because various definitions of general history existed. In some schools General History was taught as a universal history course from the fall of the Roman Empire; in others the course was taught in connection with a particular country (as had been recommended by the Madison conference); and in others it was taught as a European history course.[61] Initially, the Committee could not reach agreement about General History, other than to state that European History was a suitable subject for schools and that it would continue discussions on the topic at later meetings. At a subcommittee meeting held at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York, on November 26, 1897, Lucy Salmon voiced her support for General History because she had seen it taught with success in Germany.[62] At the Cleveland meeting, however, the Committee voted 3 to 0 (presumably

[58]Records of the American Historical Association, Library of Congress, Box 459, from the minutes of the Cleveland meeting, 27–30 December 1897.

[59]David Warren Saxe, *Social Studies in Schools: A History of the Early Years* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991). "Social studies insurgents" is a term Saxe employs throughout his book to describe the authors of the CRSE report of 1918.

[60]Ibid., p. 88.

[61]Records of the American Historical Association, Library of Congress, Box 459, from the minutes of the Cambridge meeting, 16–17 April 1897.

[62]Records of the American Historical Association, Library of Congress, Box 459, from the minutes of the Poughkeepsie meeting, 26 November 1897, recorded by Franklin S. Edwards, secretary of the Educational Club of Philadelphia, December 1897.

the 4 others abstained, because all were present) against recommending a course in General History.[63] This was probably one of the Committee's most controversial decisions, because its own data revealed that General History was taught in approximately half the nation's schools. Nonetheless, in the final report, the Committee noted that they could not recommend a course in General History because

> . . . such a course necessitates one of two modes of treatment, neither of which is sound and reasonable. By one method, energy is devoted to the dreary, and perhaps profitless, task of memorizing facts, dates, names of kings and queens, and the rise and fall of dynasties. . . . By the second method, pupils are led to deal with large and general ideas which are often quite beyond their comprehension . . . we do believe that, if the time devoted to a period of history be sufficiently long to enable him to deal with the acts of individual men and to see their work, he can be taught to group his facts; and that a power of analysis and construction, a capacity for seeing relationships and causes, and ability to grasp a general situation and to understand how it came to be, can be developed in him.[64]

The primary objection of the Committee, therefore, was the manner in which General History was typically taught. Several members of the Committee objected to the common, traditional practice of employing rote memorization in the teaching of history. Furthermore, they believed that the General History course, taught in one year's span of time, frequently was offered as the only history course in a school. In seeking to gain prominence and augment the study of history, the Committee believed that one year was simply not enough time to devote to historical studies in schools.

The Committee of Seven sought to increase the amount of time students studied history and also found it necessary to extol the legitimacy of history in the school curriculum. Members decided that "one year" of study would represent five exercises a week throughout the school year, but that "in framing its program, make possible to arrange the work in combinations of three or five periods a week, as may be convenient to particular schools."[65] If a class met three times a week, the course should extend over two years. The Committee recommended a four-year history curriculum that included (1) Ancient History, (2) Medieval and Modern European History, (3) English History, and (4) American History and Civil Government.

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[63]Records of the American Historical Association, Library of Congress, Box 459, from the minutes of the Cleveland meeting, 27–30 December 1897.

[64]The Committee of Seven, pp. 44–47.

[65]Records of the American Historical Association, Library of Congress, Box 459, from the minutes of the Cambridge meeting, 16–17 April 1897, and the minutes of the Ann Arbor meeting, 8–9 April 1898.

History coursework also was designed to accommodate the four different plans for earning high school degrees that were known as Classical, Latin or Modern Language, Scientific, and English.[66] The Committee of Ten's and the Committee of Seven's acknowledgment of different high school plans suggests that the comprehensive high school, designed to meet the needs of distinct student interests and abilities, did not originate in 1918 with the CRSE, but had clear antecedents in the late 1800s.

The Committee believed that the purpose of historical study was for students "to become, not scholastics, but men and women who know their surroundings and have come to a sympathetic knowledge of their environment . . ." and that "the most essential result of secondary education is acquaintance with political and social environment, some appreciation of the nature and state of society, some sense of the duties and responsibilities of citizenship . . ." and "something of the broad and tolerant spirit which is bred by the study of past times and conditions."[67] Yet, the discussion regarding pedagogical methods of achieving this stated purpose revealed the Committee's strong divergence of opinion. Some members preferred to use only the textbook in first-year history courses, whereas others urged a large amount of collateral work.[68] Nonetheless, a consensus held that historical study was not intended to encourage rote memorization of meaningless facts. Instead, historical thinking was to be fostered through textbook and collateral readings, written work, oral reports, map making and reading, notebook preparation, and the appropriate use of original source material. With regard to the use of source material, Committee members held significant differences of opinion. Some favored considerable readings from original source documents, also known as the Nebraska method, as advocated by prominent historians Fred Morrow Fling and Mary Sheldon Barnes. Other members, however, believed that high school students' minds were too inexperienced and immature to "form correct notions without some systematic survey of the field."[69] After

[66]The names of the high school tracks differed slightly in the meeting minutes and the published report. The meeting discussion referred to "Classical, Latin-Scientific, Modern Language, and English," whereas the published report referred to "Classical, Latin/Modern Language, Scientific, and English." Records of the American Historical Association, Library of Congress, Box 459, from the minutes of the Cambridge meeting, 16–17 April 1897.

[67]The Committee of Seven, pp. 16–17.

[68]Records of the American Historical Association, Library of Congress, Box 459, from the minutes of the Cambridge meeting, 16–17 April 1897.

[69]The Committee of Seven, p. 101.

considerable deliberation, the Committee reached a compromise. Students should read sources in connection with a good textbook, so students could learn not the art of historical investigation so much as "the art of thinking historically."[70]

At the third meeting of the Committee of Seven, held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on April 8 and 9, 1898, the Committee held long discussions about college entrance requirements in history. After all, the main impetus for the NEA's appointment of the Committee was to recommend a uniform history course curriculum. Importantly, the Committee noted that the majority of secondary students did not attend college, and, therefore, the primary purpose of historical study was not to prepare students for college, but rather to prepare students "for the duties of daily life and intelligent citizenship."[71] For those students who did plan to enter college, the Committee established college entrance guidelines for secondary historical study.

The Committee of Ten and the Committee of Seven reports reveal the influence of many educational leaders' progressive thought, including that of Francis W. Parker, Frederick Jackson Turner, Lucy Salmon, Albert Bushnell Hart, and, perhaps, John Dewey. Educational historians have debated whether expressions about education's purpose in preparing for life, enumerated in the *Cardinal Principals* report and authored by the CRSE, reveal the influence of John Dewey. William Wraga argues that the *Cardinal Principals* is a Deweyan-progressive achievement.[72] However, Herbert Kliebard finds Dewey's influence tenuous because no direct evidence, such as a citation to Dewey, exists in the report.[73] Wraga responds that the connection between the *Cardinal Principals* and Dewey was intended to demonstrate "a congruence of ideas."[74] Although there may not be direct citations to Dewey's writings in either the Committee of Ten report or the Committee of Seven report, Dewey traveled in the same circles with these progressive educational leaders. Despite the growth in the number of colleges and universities in the 1890s, the total number of college professors remained small, and they certainly exchanged ideas at the conferences, meetings, and

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[70]Ibid., p. 102.

[71]Ibid., p. 122.

[72]William Wraga, "A Progressive Legacy Squandered: The *Cardinal Principles* Report Reconsidered," *History of Education Quarterly* (Winter 2001): 511.

[73]Herbert M. Kliebard, "Letter to the Editor," *History of Education Quarterly* (Summer 2002): 309–310.

[74]William Wraga, "Letter to the Editor," *History of Education Quarterly* (Summer 2002): 311.

dinners they attended.[75] Lucy Salmon was entertained in Dewey's home at the University of Michigan.[76] An unambiguous portrayal of early progressive ideas, however, is evidenced in the writings and deliberations of the members who wrote the reports.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COMMITTEE OF TEN AND THE COMMITTEE OF SEVEN

The significance of the Committee of Ten's and the Committee of Seven's work clearly has been neglected in the literature on progressive education. The work of the Committee of Ten has received considerably more attention than the report of the Committee of Seven from educational historians, although Kliebard notes in his most recent work that the significance of the Committee of Ten "lies more in the mythology of interpretation that followed its publication than in the actual recommendations espoused by the Committee under its esteemed chairman, Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard University."[77] Kliebard argues that the main objective of the Committee of Ten was to make curricular recommendations that helped prepare students for "life" but that more recent interpretations reflect "latter-day ideas about what constitutes an appropriate curriculum for life" rather than accurately portraying the reality of the Committee of Ten's recommendations.[78] At least the work of the Committee of Ten has received limited attention, albeit potentially misinterpreted. The work of the Committee of Seven has been all but forgotten.

It is surprising that modern education literature has paid so little attention to the work of the Committee of Seven, because the Committee's work was heralded in the several decades following the publication of the report. Many articles in *The History Teacher's Magazine* lauded the Committee of Seven's work and made teaching recommendations based upon the Committee's report. Henry Johnson, a prominent historian in the early 20th century, noted that the Committee of Seven's report "was the ablest document relating to history for schools ever produced in America."[79] A possible reason for the neglect is that the Committee of Seven's work has been

[75]Laurence R. Vesey, *The Emergence of the American University* (The University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 264.

[76]Linda Robinson Walker, "John Dewey at Michigan," *Michigan Today* (Fall 1997): 18.

[77]Herbert M. Kliebard, *Changing Course: American Curriculum Reform in the 20th Century* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), p. 52.

[78]Ibid., p. 53.

[79]Henry Johnson, *Teaching of History in Elementary and Secondary Schools with Applications to Allied Studies* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), p. 59.

summarily categorized and grouped with the Committee of Ten. Hence, the report of the Committee of Seven, like that of the Committee of Ten, is heralded as the product of those who favored academic, humanist curricula, or is derided as an elitist document lacking progressive recommendations for educational change. Depicting the members of the Committee of Ten and the Committee of Seven as "traditional historians" in contrast with the "insurgent" members of the later 1916 Committee on Social Studies of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education bifurcates the portrayal.[80] Neither accurately describes the Committee of Ten's and the Committee of Seven's deliberations and recommendations.

Both reports shed light on an early progressive spirit. Both the Committee of Ten and the Committee of Seven recommended that subject matter be extended to elementary schools, in order to reach a greater number of students at younger ages. The Committee of Ten explicitly stated that females and children of foreigners, those without political power, should receive the same benefit of social education as the males destined to exercise legal rights. Such recommendations reveal egalitarian, if not also paternalistic, ideas of citizenship that had broadened to redefine citizenship in nonpolitical terms.[81] The Committee of Ten's egalitarian character is evident in its commitment to providing the best curriculum and teaching methods to all students, rather than differentiating the coursework. Nonetheless, students could select from diverse degree graduation plans based upon their interests. The influence of the Committee of Ten in the nation's secondary schools was far-reaching, and the Committee of Seven's work significantly affected the history curriculum in the nation's schools.

The Committee of Seven recommended a four-year sequence of study, despite awareness that such comprehensive curricula courted criticism. Nonetheless, the Committee believed that history and social education warranted increased attention in high school course offerings and sought to implement such change in the secondary curriculum. Today, the high school social studies curriculum differs only slightly from that recommended in the report of the Committee of Seven. Course titles may reflect more modern interests, but the study of history continues to dominate the present social studies cur-

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[80]David Warren Saxe, *Social Studies in Schools: A History of the Early Years* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

[81]Julie A. Reuben, "Beyond Politics: Community Civics and the Redefinition of Citizenship in the Progressive Era," *History of Education Quarterly* (Winter 1997): 420.

riculum in most states. Furthermore, a three- or four-year sequence of study remains the norm.

The work of the Committee of Ten and the Committee of Seven ought to be viewed as an early part of a larger progressive movement that helped to gradually transform the schools. The Committee of Ten and the Committee of Seven did not recommend maintenance of the status quo, but suggested moderate progressive reform. These changes included increased support for universal public education, expanded notions of citizenship, extension of subject matter studies to elementary students, curriculum reform, acknowledgment that the purpose of secondary education was not to prepare for college but to prepare for life, development of curricular guidelines that broadened secondary courses of study (antecedent to the comprehensive high school), recommendations of progressive pedagogies rather than reliance on traditional methods such as rote memorization, augmented history course requirements, strengthened social science studies, and a reliance on social science methodologies to gather data and support for the Committee report recommendations. Clearly, late-19th- and early-20th-century reform and change was part of a continuum, in U.S. history in general and educational history in particular. Transformation of the schools began early in the Progressive Era with the Committee of Ten, continued with the Committee of Seven, and culminated with the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. Perhaps a reconsideration of the progressive legacy is warranted.[82]

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[82]William Wraga, "A Progressive Legacy Squandered: The *Cardinal Principles* Report Reconsidered," *History of Education Quarterly* (Winter 2001): 494–519